

# Practical Pandemic Preparedness

**Steve Luther**

*Safety/Training Officer*

*The Rapid, Grand Rapids, MI*



**2010 BUS & PARATRANSIT CONFERENCE**

# H1N1 Comes to Our Town

- 4/13/09: 1<sup>st</sup> confirmed case in U.S.
- 4/26/09: Declared a public health emergency
- 4/27/09: 1<sup>st</sup> suspected case in Grand Rapids, MI
- 6/11/09: Declared a pandemic by W.H.O.

Breaking Newsletter, Editors' choice, Health »

## Kent County health officials investigating possible swine flu case

By John Barnes

April 27, 2009, 3:43PM



AP Photo

Passengers, wearing surgical masks as a precaution against infection, arrive at the airport in Mexico City on Sunday. A Kent County resident who recently returned from Mexico has come down with some of the symptoms associated with swine flu.

Kent County health officials are sending a nasal swab to the state health department to determine if the person tested may be the county's first case of swine flu.

# It's Really not "Swine" Flu



# But Kissing Not Advised



# Employee Concerns

- How Does it Spread?
- Will I Get Sick?
- Will I Lose My Job?
- Who Will Take Care of My Children?
- Will the Shots Hurt Me?



# Management Concerns

- Will employees take advantage of relaxed rules?
- Will we have to cut service?
- Will we have to spend a lot of money?
- Will we need to stockpile supplies?

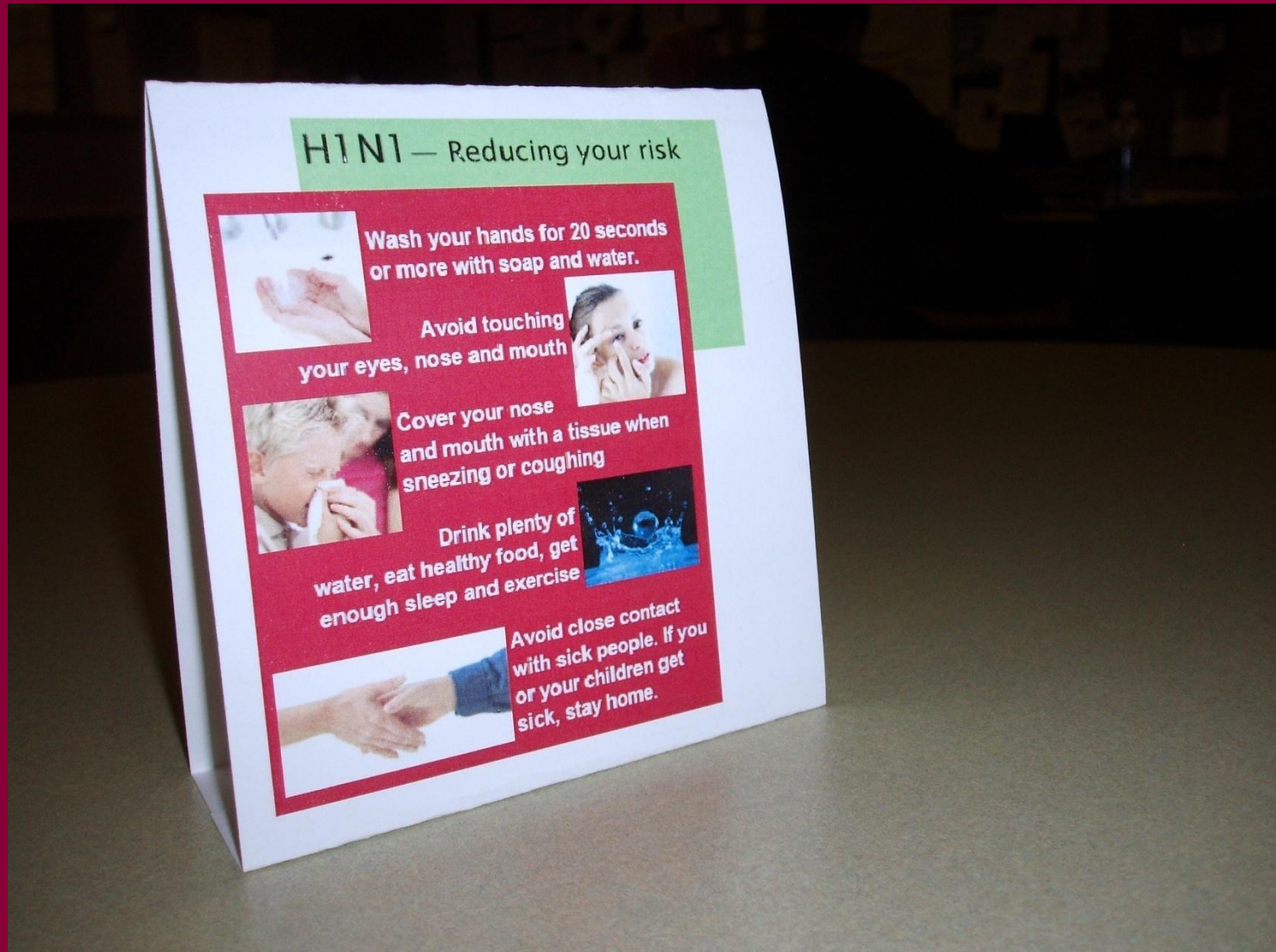


# The 5 Basic Protocols

- Wash hands frequently
- Use cough and sneeze etiquette
- Develop healthy habits
- Stay home if sick
- Get vaccinated



# Putting Plans into Action





# 1. Keep Employees Informed

- Local Health Department Fact Sheets
- Materials from CDC or flu.gov

## General Public Fact Sheet

### Kent County Health Department Fact Sheet H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)



#### What is H1N1 Influenza?

- H1N1 Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus. Outbreaks of influenza happen regularly among pigs and usually cause high levels of illness and low death rates in pigs. Swine flu was first isolated from a pig in 1930.
- Like all influenza viruses, swine flu viruses change constantly. New viruses that are a mix of swine, human and/or avian (bird) influenza viruses can emerge.

#### Human Infections

- In late March and early April 2009, human cases of H1N1 influenza A infections were identified internationally and in the United States.
- Vaccines for human seasonal flu are not believed to provide protection from H1N1 flu.

#### How Does H1N1 Flu Spread?

- Flu viruses are mainly spread from person to person when someone with the virus coughs or sneezes. H1N1 flu is not spread by eating pork or other pork related products.
- People may also become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their eyes, mouth or nose.
- Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick.

#### Staying Healthy

- Most important: **WASH YOUR HANDS!**
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu viruses.
- Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

#### Avoid Contact with Sick People

- If you get sick, it is recommended that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

#### How Long Can An Infected Person Spread H1N1 Flu?

- People with H1N1 flu virus should be considered potentially contagious as long as they have symptoms and for up to 7 days following the start of illness.
- Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

**Worth Repeating:  
Wash Your Hands!**

## 2. Use Stickers and Posters

- Remind employees to wash hands frequently.



# 3. Provide Supplies



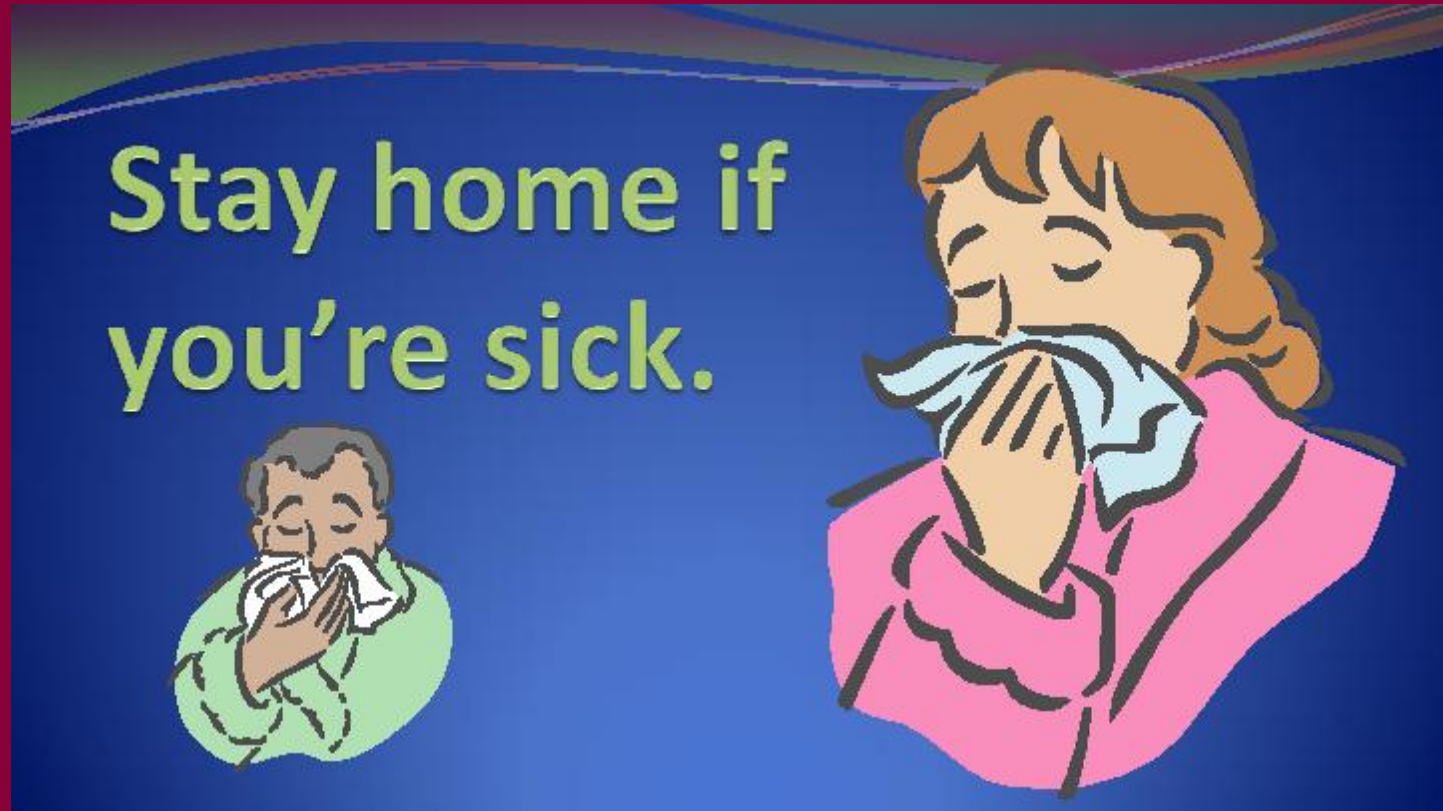
- Hand sanitizers
- Antiseptic wipes
- Antiseptic sprays
- Nasal tissues
- Gloves?
- Masks (N95)?

# Use Other Media

Avoid touching  
your eyes, nose  
or mouth.



# Use Other Media



# Lessons Learned

## Obstacles

- Union/Management agreements
- Policies that may hinder a good pandemic program
- Convincing management and employees

## Suggestions

- Start with a plan
- Pay attention to the details
- Keep the information fresh and up-to-date
- Keep the program simple